

## [Stories, Poems, Jargon of Hack Drivers]

FOLKLORE

NEW YORK Forms to be Filled out for Each Interview

FORM A Circumstances of Interview

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER Marion Charles Hatch,

ADDRESS 862 First Ave. New York

DATE Dec. 20, 1938

SUBJECT STORIES, POEMS, JARGON OF HACK DRIVERS.

1. Date and time of interview

Taxi Drivers Union of Greater New York. 1947 Broadway

2. Place of interview

3. Name and address of informant

Stories by John Resenthal, J. [Bowen?], Charles Mackey, Jack Ryan Poems by [Lew Goodman?]. Jargon collected [indiscrimately?].

4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant.

5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you

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6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc.

FOLKLORE

NEW YORK

FORM C Text of Interview (Unedited)

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER Marion Charles Hatch,

ADDRESS 862 First Ave., New York

DATE Dec. 20, 1938

SUBJECT STORIES, POEMS, JARGON OF HACK DRIVERS. FIRST DAY ON A CAB

Told by John Rosenthal.

The first day out was a Sunday. I got the job through a police officer. Because of being a new man it was hard to get a job in any fleet. The day I started to ride was a thrill to me. I wanted to ride all over the city and see the sights without even thinking of picking up fares.

I started out at 135th and Madison and wound up at Fifth Ave., and Tenth St. There I got a little tired after two hours riding around and doing nothing but riding, and parked on a corner.

In about ten minutes I got a call to 59th St. and Fifth Ave., I threw the flag and proceeded toward the destination. As I approached 34th St. and Fifth Ave. A lady hailed me. Without much thinking on my part I pulled over to the curb, to pick her up.

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Opening the door the man that I had inside said "This is only 34th St. Seeing the embarrassment I was in I told him I forgot where he told me to go.

At first I wandered around to see the town and didn't want a call. Then finally I wanted to pick up two passengers at once.

\*\*\*\*\* 2 "HERE'S A LOLLAPALOOOZA!"

Told by John Rosenthal.

I got a call at 140th and Third Ave. The man got in with about six or seven large bundles. He told me immediately it was a \$20 or \$25 call and not to be afraid of getting beat. "This is very important stuff I got here. Expensive."

"We went all through the Bronx. Made about a dozen stops. Each time the passenger took some little package inside and delivered it. We worked our way down to Manhattan making about twenty stops. From there we worked our way to Long Island making about fifteen stops. We went to Brooklyn and made 25 stops there. Each one of these stops the fare opened up a bundle and took out something which I couldn't make out, ran into a store and was out in about two minutes.

After [making?] the first five or six stops my curiosity was aroused and I tried to get into the cab and see for myself what was in there. As I was about to open the door he says "Where you goin'?" and I told him one of the bundles fell down. But he seemed to be a wise one and said, "Listen if you have any doubt about getting paid you can go now. I'll get another cab."

At that time there was about \$2.00 on the clock. Well I admitted to him I was kinda curious to know what was inside with the excuse that it might be stolen goods. But seein' that he spoke so confidently about letting me go and getting another cab I decided he must be on the level.

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After making the last stop in Brooklyn he said, "180th St and Southern Boulevard!" There he got out and told me to get some coffee, if I wanted to, because' he'd be there five or ten minutes. But I didn't want to take any chance. I stayed in the cab, keeping my eye on a store he went into, happy as a lark with about \$24 and change on the clock. More than a New Year's eve's bookings, anticipating at least a \$5 or \$10 tip.

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Waiting for almost an hour for him to come out I went over to a cab driver on the corner and told him to keep his eye on my cab while I went to look for the man...that was never there. The man who flew the coop. A few day's later I found out from another cab driver that the same fellow had this cab driver also but didn't ride as much, only for about \$3.00 and change. He told me that he knew who this fellow was and got paid for it.

He also told me that he was a controller in the number business and told me the only way I can collect was to get somebody who knows him because going to the police wouldn't do you no good. He took a different cab every day and beat them all.

\*\*\*\*\* BIG SHOT

Told by Charles Mackey

This happened on a Christmas Evening. It happened about six years ago. I was being paid off by a passenger on Broadway and Fifty-Third Street when another passenger walked over and got in my cab and told me to make it snappy. He wanted to go up town.

While giving the first passenger the change the second passenger already got in. He asked me what that thing was on the side of the car indicating the radio dial. I told him what it was and he asked me what was the best station to get on. So I told him that one station is as good as another to me. And he finally got started on the way up town and he asked me if I thought more of one radio star than another.

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I told him I thought each and every one was the same. He asked me then what I thought of the announcers and I told him there he had something because one announcer could put a program over a little bit better than the other fellow. He asked me who I thought was good or worth while listening to. He said would I care to hear this announcer or that one mentioning a number 4 of names. I told him about the only one that was good in my opinion was A. L. Alexander.

We had approached the destination and he got out and asked me if I had ever seen Alexander. I told him I wouldn't know him from the man in the moon and he paid me off and gave me a card and in walking away said to me any time at all to come up there and there would be nothing too good for me. To my surprise on reading the name on the card it was A. L. Alexander, chief announcer of the Columbia Broadcasting Company!

\*\*\*\*\* MAN WITHOUT A SHIRT

Told by Jack Ryan.

That Berger told me this story. It happened out in Brooklyn some place. It was a lonely section. He was approached by a man coming out of a saloon. The man had his coat collar up around his neck, his hat pulled down and spoke in a very rough voice. He had all the outward appearance of a tough guy.

Whilst Berger was convinced, at first sight, that this fellow was a hold-up man, particularly since he told him to take him to the vicinity of a very lonely part of the town, Still a hackman must take anybody who hails his cab. That's the law as long as he's not intoxicated.

When he got to his destination the passenger had him stop alongside of some empty lots. The setting was perfect for a holdup, although there were houses further down. There was

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no point in the passenger choosing that spot except it was for the purpose of holding him up.

The driver was so sure this was a stick-up, and in order to prevent getting hurt if the fellow had a gun there and was nervous, he got his money ready 5 to hand right over to him when it was asked for. The passenger asked him very gruffly how much it was. It was a \$1.70 on the clock and the driver told him that.

The passenger pulled two dollars out of his pocket and told him to keep the change much to his surprise and relief. The passenger went to button his coat up again after paying the money and the driver noticed that the reason why the fellow had his coat turned up man because he had no shirt. He wanted to conceal his neck.

\*\*\*\*\* PRESENT

Told by J. Bowen

I was in front of the Pennsylvania Hotel when a man came out, got in my car, and asked me to drive him to 39th Street and Fifth Avenue. And on the way over he told me stories about his trips around the country as a sales manager. Well he was telling of an experience he had in one town. In this story he told me, in this particular town, he made reference to his wife and asked me if I was married. This was three days before my wedding and I told him I was going to get married. Then when we got to the 39th Street and Fifth Avenue the bill was .65 cents. He said here's a dollar for yourself and then handed me \$5.00 to give to my intended wife.

\*\*\*\*\* ALL IN THE DAYS WORK

Told by Jack Ryan

This happened some time in February of this year. Down in the Bridge Street garage of the Parmelee Company, Brooklyn. This driver was pulling into the garage about three

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o'clock in the morning and he noticed smoke coming out of a tenement house in back of the garage. He stopped his cab and ran into the burning building. He wakened all the occupants, found his way to the top floor in all the 6 smoke, etc, and found a family with four or five children up there. He carried three of them out through the flames to the sidewalk, one under each arm and one on his back. Then he turned in the alarm and went back into the house and rescued the two remaining children. Then assisted other occupants of the house to get out and received a commendation from the fire department for bravery.

### \*\*\*\*\* 7 UNION SONG

By Lew Goodman. In Baltimore it's five a day, How sweet it sure does sound. The same applies out Frisco way, While we go out and hound. They both got theirs because they fought, And stuck when things were tough. We, too, our lessons have been taught, And three is not enough.

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### THE NEW HACKIE

By Lew Goodman We gave our dues to racket guys, They promised us good pay. Instead we got a lot of lies, And stayed the same old way. The C. I. U. then came along, And things began to hum. In little time we got so strong, We were no longer crum.

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### HACKIES' JARGON

Collected from New York Hack Drivers.

Hoople A 16-hour shift; a double shift.

Elk A progressive taxi driver from a Union standpoint.

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The Arm The police; from the “strong arm”

Stiff A low booker

Over the hill A long ride; originally a trip over Ft. Washington hill.

Over the Bridge Any call to Brooklyn

Schoolboy A new taxi driver

Dolly Sisters The cops in radio cars.

Snow White and the two Dopes — A sergeant and patrolman or a corporal and patrolman in a radio car.

Nightshirts Firemen, from their habit of tucking their shirts into their pants as they make a trip.

Tail light A driver who 'sucks around the boss.'

Dinger The meter.

Damper The meter

Ticking terror Same

[Busser?] One who loads four or five passengers into his cab at perhaps \$1 a head coming from the Polo Grounds or other big sports event and carries them to some midtown hotel. This in contrary to regulations.

Horsing-horse hiring - A small fleet owner, with 18 or 20 cabs, hires a driver to take a car out, buy his own gas and oil, and pay the company \$5.00 a day for the cab. What he makes above this is his own. This practice is called “horsing”.



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Indies Independent owner drivers.

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